

# The Jewish cemetery in Liebenau



Manual for visitors

## Imprint:

Measurements and calculations: Class R10c  
of the Gustav-Heinemann-Schule, Hofgeismar

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Cover picture, photo: Claudia Wesemann

Translation of the Hebrew inscriptions (based on Baruch Wormser):

Madeleine Isenberg, Los Angeles

Texts: Julia Drinnenberg

Revision of the English translation: Helmut Burmeister, Amy Cohen

Print: Town of Liebenau

## Abbreviations:

Syn – Register of the Jewish community

StA – Register of the register office (Standesamt)

Syn/Sta – identical entrances in both registers

H – Hebrew inscription

D – German inscription

Responsible for the content: Julia Drinnenberg

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## Preface:

In 2017 descendants of the Mathias family, a Jewish family that once lived in Liebenau, came to visit the local Jewish cemetery. As the gravestones were partially destroyed or badly weathered, it was difficult to match them to the names of the deceased. So we decided to make the stones "talk" again by translating the Hebrew inscriptions as perfect as possible and drawing a plan of the cemetery showing the location of the stones.

The manual for visitors of the Jewish cemetery of Liebenau was created as a project of the Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar and students of class R10c of the Gustav-Heinemann-Schule Hofgeismar in June 2018. Their teacher Claudia Wesemann made significant contributions to prepare the students for the job of measuring the stones and creating scale drawings.

The final drawing was done by Claudia Wesemann.

Julia Drinnenberg, the educational leader of the Jewish department of the Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, introduced the participants to the history of the Jewish community of Liebenau, researched the names of the decedents in the registers, and composed the manual. The sources are the registers of the Jewish community from 1827 to 1929 and the registers of the register office of Liebenau, starting in 1874. Gabriele Hafermaas, member of the educational team of the Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, accompanied the project.

Many thanks to Madeleine Isenberg, for the translation of the Hebrew inscriptions and Helmut Burmeister and Amy Cohen for the revision of the English translation.

We thank mayor Harald Munser for the support of the production of this manual.

## The Jewish cemetery in Liebenau

The Jewish cemetery in Liebenau was established at the end of the 18th century (1791) and was used until 1927. The oldest existing gravestone is from 1848, the most recent from 1927. Thirteen grave-stones still exist today. It is not in the documents where Jews from Liebenau were buried before 1791. „*The existence of Jewish inhabitants can be attested already in the end of the 16th century. (...) In 1861 39 Jews lived in Liebenau, in 1905 only 16*“ (Ralf Thaetner, Geschichte der Stadt Liebenau, 1993).

The inscriptions are partially weather-worn. Flat marble plates that had been inserted into a number of gravestones, cracks and flaws indicate that there was intentional destruction of the stones during the Nazi era. The uneven and terraced condition of the soil suggests that there are older now sunken graves.

Thanks to Baruch Wormser (\*1873) from Grebenstein, who registered the inscriptions in 1937, it is possible for us to read the missing inscriptions and to locate the gravestones corresponding to the names of the decedents. In this manual the first and the last lines – not listed by Wormser – could only be added for inscriptions that are still legible today.

A Jewish cemetery is one of the most important places for a Jewish community. Names like “House of life”, “house of eternity” or “Guter Ort” [good place] bear witness to its importance.

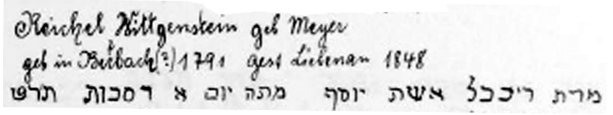
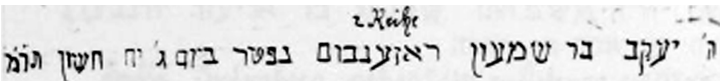
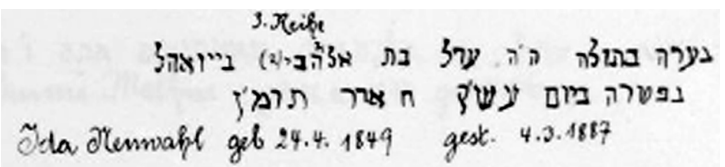
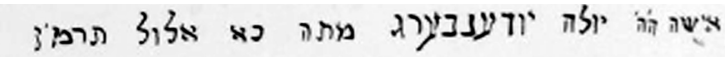
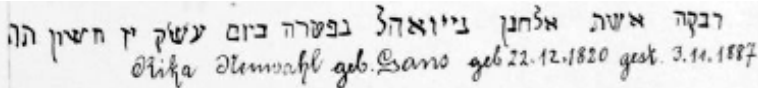
When visiting a Jewish cemetery, men cover their heads – as a symbolic act for humility and awe of the Almighty.

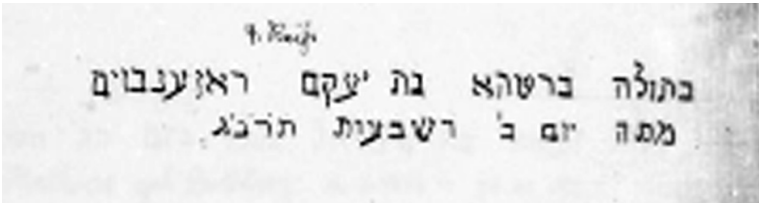
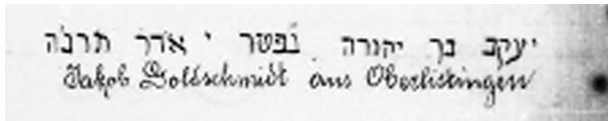
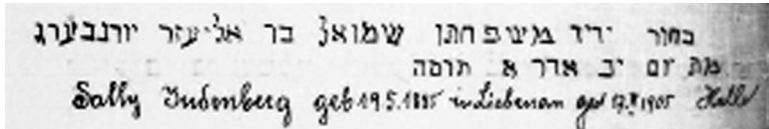
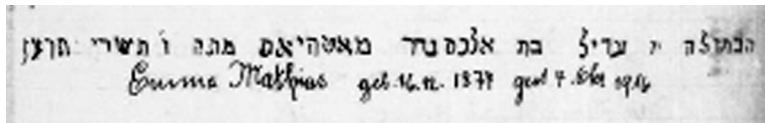
The Jewish cemetery is located far outside the town. There are two reasons for this: first, this holy place was perceived as ritually unclean because of being close to death. Second, city administrations often left an area to the Jews that was agriculturally useless and separated from their town. So, in Liebenau a piece of a forest had to be cleared and a steep decline down to the border of the cemetery had to be accepted by the Jewish community.

A Jewish cemetery is an unchangeable and eternal last resting place. Graves are never leveled, based on the belief in the resurrection of the dead. The graves are facing east in the direction of Jerusalem. On Shabbat and the Jewish holidays it is not permitted to pay a visite to the cemetery.

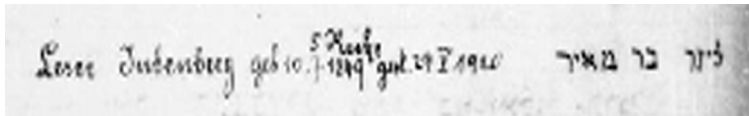
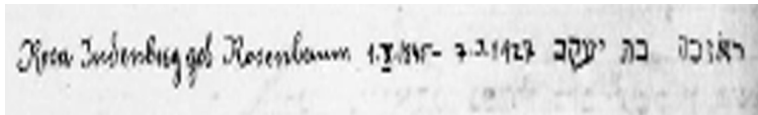
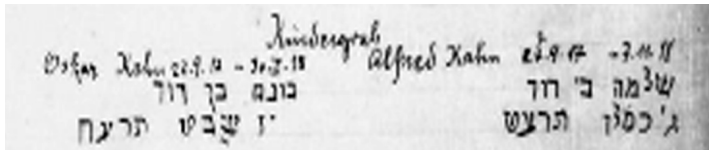
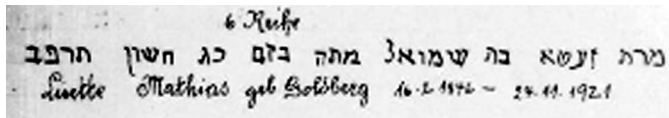
There are no floral decorations or wreaths. Ivy, Gras and wild plants grow as a sign for a peacefull connection of the cemetery to growth and decay of nature. Visitors put little stones on the gravestones to show that the decendent is not forgotten.

Only a few ornamental motifs that can still be identified, like rosettes, can be found on the tombs. The only typical Jewish motif on the Jewish cemetery in Liebenau is the Magen David on two of the gravestones.

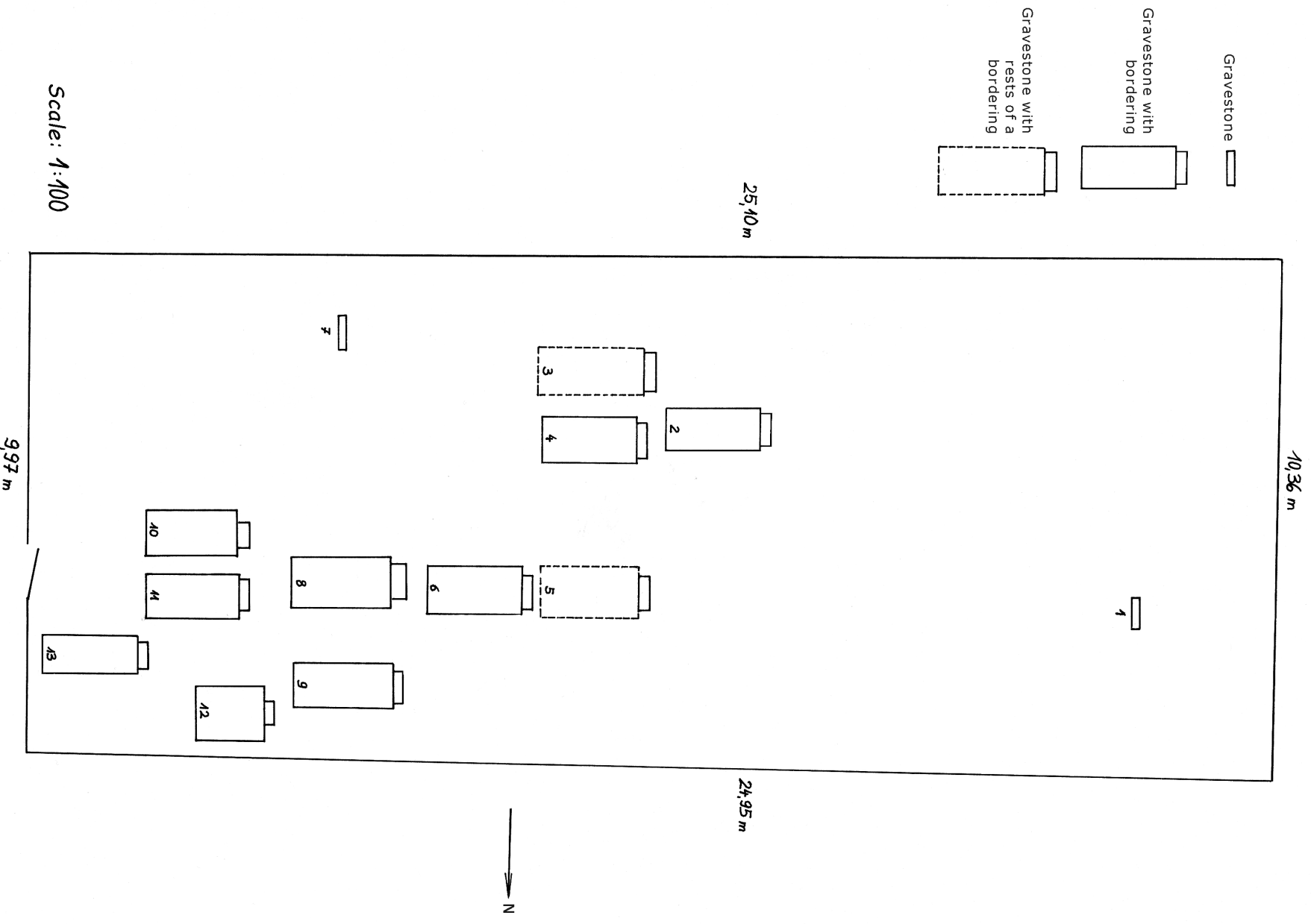
Nr.	Hebrew inscription (after Wormser)	Inscription (after Wormser/completed)	Register
1	 <p>Reichel Wittgenstein geb Meyer geb in Berbach [?] 1791 gest Liebenau 1848 מרת ריככל אשת יוסף מרתה יום א דסכות תרט</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Reichel, Wife of Josef, she died on the first day of Sukkot 5609 [Oct 12, 1848]  <b>D:</b> Here rests in God Reichel Wittgenstein, born Meyer, born in Berbach [?] 1791, died in Liebenau 1848, Peace to her ashes! Gez. [paid or signed?] from her Neveu [nephew] Simon Cohen from Wambeck</p>	<p><b>Syn:</b> died on Oct 12, 1848,  <b>Reichel Wittgenstein</b>, 59 years old, trades people in Liebenau</p>
2	<p>[Motiv: Davidstern]</p>  <p>ה' יעקב בר שמעון ראזענבורג בפטר ביזק ג' יח חשוון תרמ"ט</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Here rests Yakov, son of Yitchak Rosenbaum, he died on Tuesday, 18th Cheshvan 5640, [Nov 4, 1879]  May his soul be bound in the bundle of life</p>	<p><b>Jakob Rosenbaum</b> [without entries]</p>
3	 <p>בערה בתולה ה'ה ערל בת אלחנן (ג) בייואהל בפטר בהם עש' ח אדר תרמ"ז Ida Neuwahl geb 24.4.1849 gest. 4.3.1887</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Here rests the young girl, Edel, daughter of Elchanan Neuwahl, she died on Sabbat eve, 8th Adar 5647 [Mar 4, 1887], May her soul be bound in the bundle of life  <b>D.:</b> Ida Neuwahl born on Apr 24, 1849 died on Mar 4, 1887 - Rest gently</p>	<p><b>Syn/StA:</b> She died on Mar 4, 1887, <b>Ida Neuwahl</b>, 37 years old, daughter of E. Neuwahl and his wife, Rika born Gans from Liebenau</p>
4	<p>[Motiv Davidstern]</p>  <p>אשה ה'ה יולה יודענבערג מרתה כא אלול תרמ"ז</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Here rests Julie Judenberg, she died on 21st Elul 5647 [Sept 10, 1887]  May her soul be bound in the bundle of life</p>	<p><b>Syn/StA:</b> She died on Sept 10, 1887, <b>Julie Judenberg</b>, 70 years old, widow of Meyer Judenberg, born in Mehle, daughter of the late tradesman Oberndorf and his late wife Gella, born Abraham from Mehle</p>
5	 <p>רבקה אשת אלחנן בייואהל בפטר בהם עש' יז חשוון תרמ"ז Rifka Neuwahl geb Gans geb 22.12.1820 gest. 3.11.1887</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Here rests Rifka, wife of Elchanan Neuwahl, she died on Shabbat eve, 17th Cheshvan 56.. [?] [Nov 3, 1887], May her soul be bound in the bundle of life  <b>D:</b> Rika Neuwahl, born Gans, born Dec 22, 1820, died on Nov 3, 1887 - Rest gently</p>	<p><b>Syn/StA:</b> Died on Nov 3, 1887, <b>Rika Neuwahl</b>, 66 years old, wife of Elkan Neuwahl, daughter of the late tradesman Mathias Gans and his late wife Julia born Meier from Liebenau</p>

Nr.	Hebrew inscription (after Wormser)	Inscription (after Wormser/completed)	Register
6	<p>[Motiv Rosette]</p>  <p>בתולה ברשהא בת יעקם ראזענבוים ממה יום ב' רשבועות תרנ"ג</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Here rests the young woman Bertha, daughter of Jakob Rosenbaum, she died the 2nd day of Shavuot 5653 [May 22, 1893], May her soul be bound in the bundle of life</p>	<p><b>Syn/StA:</b> She died on May 22, 1893 <b>Berta Rosenbaum</b>, 44 years old, daughter of the late tradesman Jakob Rosenbaum and his late wife Bräunchen, born Vorenberg from Liebenau</p>
7	<p>[Motiv Rosette]</p>  <p>יעקב בן יהודה ב"פ י אדר תרנ"ה Jakob Goldschmidt aus Oberlistingen</p>	<p><b>H:</b> Here rests the honorable 'raw' [the Hebrew <i>raw</i> or <i>rav</i>; in English <i>Rabbi</i>, here has the meaning of: <i>a wise man</i>], Lehmann, known as Yehuda [?], son of Jakob, He died on 10th Adar 5655 [Feb 15 ,1905] May his soul be bound in the bundle of life <b>D:</b> backside: Jakob Goldschmidt from Oberlistingen</p>	<p><b>Jakob Goldschmidt</b> [without entries]</p>
8	 <p>במור ירד בנשיחתו שמואל בר אליעזר יודנבערג מת ז"ס י"ב אדר א' תרס"ה Sally Judenberg geb 19.5.1885 in Liebenau gest 17.2.1905 Halle</p>	<p><b>H.:</b> A young man, loved by his family, Schmuël, son of Eliezer Judenberg, he died on 12th Adar 5665 [Feb 17 ,1905] <b>D:</b> Sally Judenberg, born on May 19, 1885 in Liebenau, he died in Feb 17, 1905 (H..?)</p>	<p><b>Samuel Judenberg</b> [without entry in the death-register. After the birth-register he is the son of Leser Judenberg and his wife Rosa, born Rosenbaum]</p>
9	 <p>הבתולה י עדיל בת אלכסנדר מאטהיאס מתה ו' תשרי תרע"ו Emma Mathias geb 16.12.1874 gest 4.10.1916</p>	<p><b>H:</b> The young girl Edil, daughter of Alexander [Süßkind?] Mathias, she died on 6th Tishrei 5677 [Oct 4, 1916] <b>D:</b> Emma Mathias, born on Dec 16, 1874, died on Oct 4, 1916</p>	<p><b>Emma Mathias</b> [without entries, Emma Mathias was the daughter of Lisette Mathias, grave 13]</p>



Nr.	Hebrew inscription (after Wormser)	Inscription (after Wormser/completed)	Register
10		<p><b>H:</b> Leiser, son of Meier</p> <p><b>D:</b> Leser [Leiser] Judenberg, born on July 10, 1849 – died May 29, 1920</p>	<p><b>StA:</b> The salesman <b>Lazarus Judenberg</b>, died on May 29, 1920, 70 years old, called Leser Judenberg, son of the tradesman Meier Judenberg, who died in Fürstenau, and his wife Julia, born Oberndorf, she died and was living in Liebenau</p>
11		<p><b>H:</b> Rechza [notation?], daughter of Yakov</p> <p><b>D:</b> Reta Judenberg, born Rosenbaum, Oct 10, 1845 – Mar 7, 1927</p>	<p><b>StA:</b> Rheta, called <b>Rosa Judenberg</b>, born Rosenbaum, died on Mar 7, 1927, 83 years old, Bahnhofstreet nr. 115, born in Oberlistingen, distr. Wolfhagen, widow</p>
12	<p>[Doppel-Kindergrab]</p> 	<p><b>1. D:</b> Oskar Katz Sept 27, 1917 – Jan 30, 1918</p> <p><b>H:</b> Bunim, son of David, 17th Shevat 5678 [Jan 30, 1918]</p> <p><b>2. D:</b> Alfred Katz, Sept 27, 1917 – Nov 7, 1918</p> <p><b>H:</b> Schlomo, son of David, 3rd Kislev 5679 [Nov 7, 1918]</p>	<p><b>StA: 1. Oskar Katz</b>, 4 months, died on Jan 30, 1918, son of the merchant David Katz and his wife,</p> <p><b>2. Alfred Katz</b>, 1 year old, died on Nov 7, 1918 son of merchant David Katz and his wife Selma, born Mathias</p>
13		<p><b>H:</b> The woman Zeta, daughter of Schmuël, she died on 23rd Cheshvan 5682 [Nov 24, 1921]</p> <p><b>D:</b> Lisette Mathias, born Goldberg, Feb 16, 1842 – Nov 24, 1921</p>	<p><b>StA: Lisette Mathias</b>, born Goldberg, died on Nov 24, 1921, 75 years old, Steinweg 30, born in Rimbeck, district Warburg, married to the merchant Süßkind, called Willy Mathias in Liebenau</p>

# Plan of the Jewish cemetery in Liebenau



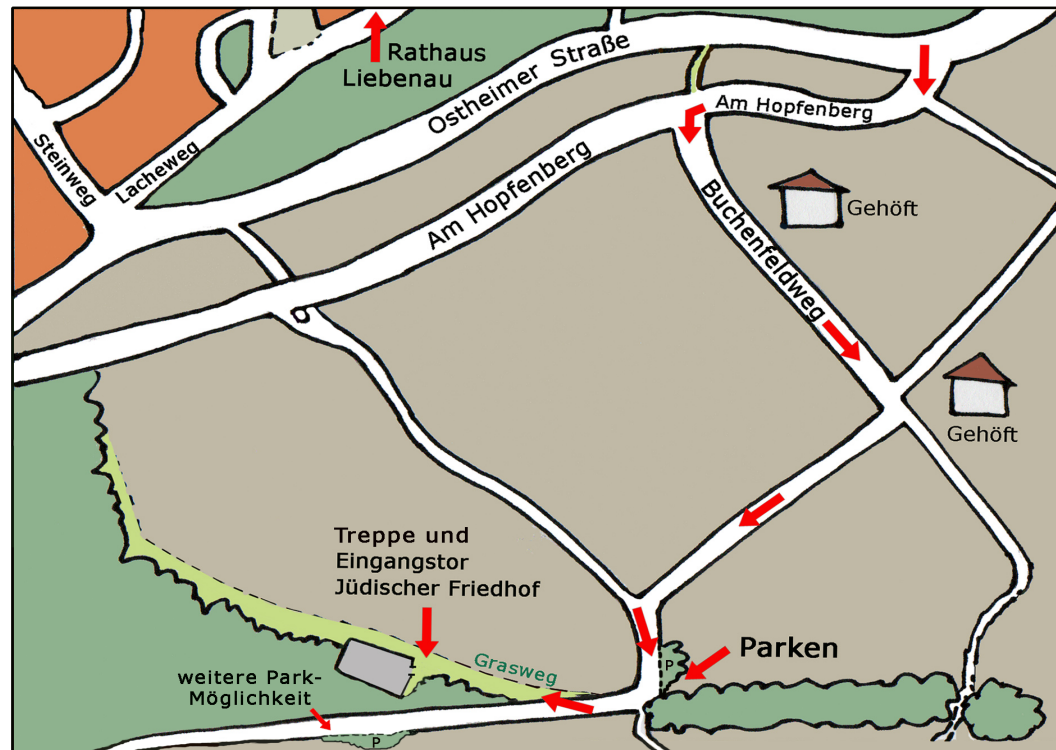
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List of the graves  
corresponding to the position plan

1. Reichel Wittgenstein
2. Jakob Rosenbaum
3. Ida Neuwahl
4. Julie Judenberg
5. Rika Neuwahl
6. Bertha Rosenbaum
7. Jakob Goldschmidt
8. Samuel Judenberg
9. Emma Mathias
10. Leiser Judenberg
11. Reta Judenberg
12. Oskar und Alfred Katz
13. Lisette Mathias

## Directions



**The key to the gate** of the Jewish cemetery can be picked up in the town hall in Liebenau, Lacheweg 1.

**Coming from Hofgeismar by car** you will be on the **Ostheimer Straße**. Turn left onto the street **Am Hopfenberg**. Turn left again onto the **Buchenfeldweg**. Follow the street until the second farmhouse - there you turn to the right onto an unpaved road. At its end you turn to the left. When you reach the forest, you can park your car on the left on a grassy side stripe. Please take note not to block agricultural vehicles passing by.

On foot leave the paved street and turn right onto a grassy path.

Soon you reach the steps leading to the cemetery gate.